
ROYAL VETO, CONSIDERED;

A N D

TWO LETTERS,

BY DETECTOR.



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ROYAL VETO,

ON THE

APPOINTMENT

OF THE

Irish Roman Catholic Prelacy,

CONSIDERED, IN A REPLY

TO THE

RIGHT REV^D. DR. MILNER'S LETTER

TO A

PARISH PRIEST.

BY AN

IRISH CATHOLIC CLERGYMAN.

To which are added, Two Letters on the same Subject,

BY DETECTOR.

LONDON :

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MY LORD,

WITH the most profound respect for your lordship's person, and the most enthusiastic admiration of your literary abilities, I feel myself impelled to offer my sentiments upon your Letter to a Parish Priest; because that letter, though probably not intended for the public eye, has yet unfortunately found its way into the public prints, and glances rather severely at a body of men whom you profess to esteem; and whom I, in common with thousands of my country, do most sincerely venerate and love—the Roman Catholic Prelates of Ireland.

In expectation, since the day the above letter was published, that some of them would come forward to remonstrate with your lordship upon

the unkind insinuations thrown out there; as well as upon the unfairness of the reasoning, which seems to pervade the entire of this hasty production, I repressed my own feelings, in the hope that more weighty and more authoritative reprehension from those immediately concerned would impress your lordship with a sense of error, and elicit ere now that retractation which Catholic Ireland expects from you.

No bishop, however, has raised his voice on this occasion: long habituated to the obloquy of *enemies*, they probably think that silence is a still more becoming shield against the unintentional errors of a *friend*. For my part, my lord, though but a poor parish priest, I am honoured with the confidence of several Catholic Prelates in Ireland, of which confidence I have availed myself to obtain the most accurate information of the general and individual sentiments at their last meeting in Dublin; as well as at their less formal discussions, in convivial intercourse and occasional private communications.

No reluctance did I meet in any of my respected friends to satisfy my curiosity in every particular; I can therefore assure your lordship, that they feel, and deeply too, what you

have unguardedly dropt in this letter concerning them. Some are shocked; others are perhaps scandalized at it; yet they have not answered, nor will they answer.—Your lordship, I trust, will estimate to the full the value of that forbearance. My humble notions are less refined; I shall therefore take the liberty, as your letter is before the public, of offering such remarks upon it, as justice and truth suggest; walking after your lordship through its various paragraphs, in nearly the same order you yourself have thought proper to arrange them.

My lord, under the impression made upon me by your many masterly productions, my surprise, on reading your Letter to a Parish Priest, was at least as great as that which affected your lordship, when, in the outset of that letter, you compare the prevailing dissatisfaction of my countrymen in Ireland, with their warm effusions, when they greeted your first arrival in this kingdom.

Viewing you, my lord, as the powerful asserter of historical truth in your Letter to a Prebendary; as the censor, the reprovcr, the silencer of that calumnious misrepresentation which so long and so basely aspersed our tenets,

and our persons throughout this empire, their gratitude burst forth not only wherever you appeared, but wherever your name was mentioned. When you afterwards thought proper to present yourself to them in another point of view, conceding to the secular power, as if in the name and by the authority of their bishops, such interference in the appointment of the Irish Catholic Prelacy, as in their mind must entail inevitable destruction upon their religion in Ireland; when they beheld you, moreover, strenuously advocating this hated measure, and descending to explanations of your language and conduct so much beneath *their* notions of your candour; they were hurt my lord—you should not be surpris'd at it—they were mortified, disappointed.

Your lordship thinks proper to console yourself in the persuasion that all this proceeds from a principle of orthodoxy; that the hearts indeed of your former friends are right; but their heads are not a little wrong. I bow, my lord, most submissively to this English compliment, but I hope to convince your lordship before I take my leave, that we are fully warranted to return it to you word for word, and with more force and propriety.

Think not however, my lord, that your former friends entertain the slightest suspicion of your orthodoxy : a reference to your learned, pious, or controversial works, was superfluous ; these friends were and are convinced of your lordship's inviolable attachment to the purity of the Catholic faith ; but they are also convinced, that the rectitude of your heart has not secured you in the present case from a most eccentric aberration. A mortal wound may be inflicted by the hand of him who would not aim the blow : a man may act wrong and intend right. The blow once effectually struck, it is of little consequence to the Catholics of Ireland, whether it was dealt by a real friend or by an insidious enemy ; whether by Dr. Milner or by Sir John Throckmorton, or T. M'Kenna or Peter Plymley ; with this difference however, that the writers who preceded your lordship in this disastrous speculation, were almost totally overlooked, or comparatively insignificant on the same list with their truly learned favourite, Dr. Milner.

The positive unrestricted interference so flippantly conceded by such broad-minded Catholics, being utterly unprecedented in the actual circumstances, carried rejection in its front : no Pope would ever sanction what he

must deem with you, unlawful and schismatical. But your lordship's proposal of a negative and restricted interference, besides being legally impracticable (as Mr. Clinch has demonstrated) is so fraught with unfitness, (pardon the expression) and eventual mischief, that I am astonished how a man of your lordship's great abilities and professed sentiments could seriously attempt to recommend it.

Our illustrious countryman, Edmund Burke, whose declaration upon this subject you carried in your pocket-book, I presume, as an unanswerable argument, knew Ireland too well to think, that a theological distinction between positive and negative interference, as likely to be acted upon here, would obviate the evils which his impartiality felt, and his eloquence deplored as the probable result of it.

He said not only, that "never were the members of one religious sect fit to appoint the pastors to another," but "that those who have no regard for their welfare, will not appoint such as are proper." He said, "that favourable as the administration then was, it was a great deal to suppose, they would appoint bishops for the Roman Catholic Church of Ireland, with a religious regard to our advantage: perhaps; said

he, they cannot, perhaps they dare not, do so. And if the superior power were always in a disposition to act conscientiously in this matter, for those with whom that power is at variance, has it the capacity and means of doing this? How can the lord lieutenant (and we may say a fortiori, how can the King) form the least idea of their merits, so as to discern which of the Popish clergy is fit to be made a bishop. It cannot be, the idea is ridiculous. He will hand them over to lord lieutenants of counties; justices of peace, and other persons, who, for the purpose of vexing and turning to derision this miserable people, will pick out the worst and most obnoxious they can find amongst the clergy to set over the rest; informers, tale-bearers, perverse and obstinate men, flatterers, who turn their back upon their flock, to court the protestant gentlemen of the country, will be the objects of preferment."

All these evils you say, resulting from a positive interference, are avoided by the *negative* or Veto.

My lord, you are convinced, that as bad Catholic bishops, men ignorant, unprincipled, immoral, are the most efficient instruments in the hands of an anticatholic government for

the overthrow of the Catholic faith; such men would, of course, be preferred for the hierarchy in Ireland: and though the government should not have any other power than that of rejecting, we are warranted to suppose, they will continue to reject, while pious, zealous, learned or exemplary clergymen are presented to them. The restriction, relied on by your lordship, must prove, I fear, but a cobweb obstacle. You would limit the exercise of this negative to twice, thrice, or four times, which you are pleased to call a reasonable number; and admit no species of objection against our candidates, except merely an *avowal of a well grounded suspicion of their loyalty.*

If your *reasonable number*, my lord, is to extend to four selections, it will go to the rejecting of twelve R. C. clergymen on every vacancy; but as so many, qualified for the mitre, are not to be found in any diocese of the kingdom, I must suppose that your *reasonable number* does not exceed four priests; and then it would appear, that confining the executive to the solitary exception of disloyalty, you will not even allow it, upon that ground, to reject any greater number than four; you will stand firmly upon the threshold of the fifth excep-

tion, and there shut the door in his Majesty's face; though the very same implements which threw the disqualifying dirt of suspicion upon four shall be equally well charged, and equally well wielded to bedaub a sixth, a twelfth, or a twentieth, until the unexceptionable toad-eater, the immoral booby, or the *bon diable* shall be brought forward for the comfort and the edification of his Catholic brethren in Ireland.

Should the bishops refuse to recommend this priest for consecration to the Holy See, shall not they, in their turn, be required to substantiate their objections, and to prove them regularly in a court of law? Will no scandal result from this, nor any danger to the Irish Catholic Church?

Again, my lord, should you, in the teeth of all probability, succeed in confining the operation of this negative to four clergymen, I must beg leave to remind your lordship, that a great majority of Roman Catholic Sees in Ireland cannot furnish more than three priests really fit for the prelacy; and that therefore to rest in a government so notoriously hostile to our religion, a power of rejecting three men in every diocese of this kingdom, selected by

the best qualified judges, as most able by their learning, piety, and zeal, to promote the interests of Catholicity, is alone a tremendous evil; opening a wide door to the appointment of unfit men, and to the ultimate destruction of the Catholic faith among us. But you will never succeed in an attempt to confine the operation of this negative; for the Crown, in virtue of its ecclesiastical headship, will then assert as its *right* what in your present stipulation you would set down as a *concession*.

The Judges of the Land will interpret the law accordingly, and they will interpret it, and make it speak against you. In a concern of such importance, they will not acknowledge in you a power to restrain the executive to one single species of exception. Where the establishment presumes not to restrict in such a way, a religion barely tolerated will not be allowed that privilege.

Should it here be pleaded, that *appointment* to the prelacy, being a spiritual concern, it cannot conscientiously be conceded by Roman Catholics to an anti-catholic executive, nor be reasonably expected from them, you will be instantly answered, that by this negative controul, essential as it will then be called, to the

well-being and security of the state, the Crown does not appoint to your prelacy ; it only asserts a right which you yourself have admitted, of stating the civil disqualifications of the man you thought proper to select for this spiritual dignity, and of rejecting him accordingly.

Neither will you succeed in compelling the Crown to specify its proper objections. But if, for the purpose of carrying this point quietly at present, our masters shall agree to limit interference to the single point of loyalty ; be pleased to observe, that loyalty, by general acceptance in Ireland, is a word of most extensive import ; a compound of such multiplied ingredients, that Catholic zeal, Catholic piety, Catholic eloquence and learning, &c. may be pronounced incompatible with it ; and be therefore very efficient grounds for repelling from the prelacy those very ecclesiastics, whom the genuine spirit of enlightened Catholicity would select out of hundreds for that exalted trust.

Tell us not now, my lord, that we are mad or wrongheaded, if we reprobate, as alarmingly dangerous to our church, that eventful tender you would so placidly make to our anti-catholic legislature ; to be entwined around

the sceptre of our anti-catholic King. Once granted, it can never be recalled; once emerged in the prerogative, it will ever be above our controul. The unbending rigour of the law disdains our little gratuitous interpretations.

But Bernard Clinch's masterly arguments must silence for ever all cavilling upon the subject. That Catholic lawyer, whose talents and literary acquirements, though of first rate magnitude, are not, as yet, sufficiently known or appreciated by his Catholic countrymen, has, in his late admirable pamphlet, *An Enquiry, &c. &c.* incontrovertibly shewn, that the projected concession of a negative interference shall necessarily be declared a right; which, though dormant, or inoperative heretofore, must, if once thus established, quicken into the most vigorous energy, as an unalienable prerogative of his Majesty's Crown.

Mr. Clinch, after emphatically reminding us, my lord, that the relation in which the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Ireland stands towards his Majesty's prerogative and person, is single in the history of Christendom; and so far from having a precedent or parallel, is in direct contradiction to every precedent; he goes on to shew, and does shew most ably;

that by the single definition of the King's ecclesiastic headship, as given in one of the thirty-nine Articles, the Roman Catholic religion of England was destroyed; and shall then the same headship, operating more directly upon the Catholic religion of Ireland, and combined with the law, be now held forth to us as really innoxious!!!

Whatever might have been the source of papal supremacy, it is certain, that the assumption of this authority by the kings of England, the rights appendant to it, and the offices vested in the Crown thereby, are now the law and constitution; that is, the rule of action, and the governing spirit; the will of the sovereign, and the tenure of sovereignty.

Wherever, according to Mr. Clinch, a constitution is recognized, the contracting parties are sovereignly independent of each other in the compact; and their relative obligations must depend upon its stability.

“Whatever is admitted to benefits in a subsisting constitution, without such independence, or share in the mass of its sovereignty, may be *enfranchised* indeed, yet is only *tolerated*: and if it be secured from oppression, that secu-

rity must issue from something extrinſick to the conſtitution, and perhaps dangerous.”

“Now the conſtitution of England comprehends its church and its temporal ſtate; and the kingly office extends to both.”

“Let us ſee what the eccleſiaſtical headſhip imports, and what it exacts of the firſt Magiſtrate. Firſt of all, there is but one church known to the conſtitution, and this church is a true one, in the eye of fundamental law; that is, not only legal and eſtabliſhed, but ſacred: By the act of our union, the church of Ireland is eſtabliſhed into one, with the church of England, for ever.

“Secondly—The ſupreme headſhip of this one legal, acknowledged, and ſacred church, for the conſtitution, is declared to be annexed to the Crown inſeparably. To it, of right, belongs and muſt belong all juriſdiction, which the Pope or any ſpiritual perſon did, or could lawfully exerciſe; and all papal authority formerly held or practiſed by the biſhops of Rome, was an uſurpation upon the indefeaſible right of the Crown.

“Thirdly—The King is bound to defend the

above points by three distinct and supreme obligations; by that of defending his legal inheritance; by that of upholding, favouring, and cherishing his own true Church; by that of a solemn oath, which is the only bond of fidelity that can be demanded between independent contracting parties.

“From these positions it follows, and it has been declared to be the law, that his Majesty is bound by a right and obligation paramount, to discountenance all foreign, alien, and other religions. The cause is become at present extremely simple; and if left to the common sense of any fair dealing individual, would not be suffered to go farther than this brief and decisive statement. The King must administer all powers bestowed on him, according to his constitutional duty.”

“This duty, in ecclesiastical matters, expressly binds him to consider one church as sacred, and all ecclesiastical jurisdiction to be flowing from his own property, and our church authority to be essentially and everlastingly an usurpation upon himself, and upon the true church established. If, therefore, any controul be appointed by statute or by private negociation, upon these constitutional duties

and titles, must it not be ancillary and subservient to these duties? If any controul over our religion, which stands in opposition to the King's, be given to his Majesty, will he use this controul impartially, as between the two churches? In other words, will his Majesty disinherit his crown? Will he surrender his church? Will he forget his oath; or, will he use this controul in discouragement of the Catholic religion? If any man thinks he will not, I confess myself at a loss for words to extol his faith; but let him beware of disclosing such his faith. To believe in this case, may be nothing worse than fatuity; to teach it, would be to strike at the constitutional props of his Majesty's throne. Let then a statute-emancipation be supposed as ample as you will; that is, let every disqualification which, by statute law, or by legal practice advancing the remedial severity of law, exists against us, be supposed away. I will go farther, and I will suppose that the act requiring the King to join in communion with the church of England, and excluding Catholics from the crown, are now repealed; but let only the basis of the constitution remain as before the abdication of James II. In this hypothesis let a negative controul upon the office of our priesthood be given to the King; first, by the

agreement of our bishops, and secondly, by the confirmation of law.

“ The question will be, in what right and under what limitations his Majesty will henceforth hold this negative power? And what I maintain is, that he will hold and exercise it in right of his crown, and as a portion of ecclesiastical headship, whatever had been the private meaning, or even the express declaration of these prelates who made the surrender. For it is a ground and maxim, especially in the English law, that whenever a possession is obtained under a title or agreement which the law would have defeated, by him who shews forth a prior and larger title, the person so obtaining possession, is reinstated by the law in his antient estate, and the recent acquisition assumes all the qualities of the better title, although this latter have been kept in suspense by a length of usurped possession.

“ This principle, though rarely quoted, is yet of most vigorous authority ; and rests upon analogies that predominate over the spirit of English distributive and legislative justice. Neither can the person so restored by the law, refuse the privilege it offers, where the continuity of title is an advantage to those who suc-

ceed him. The allowance of a negative right to the King, by Roman Catholics, will approximate their relations of duty to that of Protestants who admit the ecclesiastical headships. It will give to his Majesty something withheld by Catholics, yet settled on him by the constitution. Let the Catholics be as obstinate as they please in terming it a *gift*, it will and must be accepted as a *recognition*; and when possessed, it will be held and exercised under the elder and more beneficial title of the King's indefeasible prerogative; for the most excellent dignity of the King cannot compromise its rights—much less can it be at variance with itself. It cannot rule the church established, in virtue of a regal supremacy over both states, and controul our church at the same time under a voluntary appointment, which, if binding, would falsify the title by which that very church established is submitted to the crown.

“ This reasoning I confidently offer to any sensible reader; to any legal understanding; to any Reverend Judge. I say, that while the constitution upholds the supremacy over all estates; while the constitution upholds one church, and ignores every other religious establishment; a negative right given to the

King is a vile soliciting of Catholics to apostacy."

Be not offended, my lord, if with such consequences in prospect, we proclaim danger, in utter disregard of imputation upon our heads or our hearts. I must also take the liberty of reminding your lordship, that you are still in error, when you assert, that in acting as you have here done, you only follow the Roman Catholic Prelates of Ireland in what you choose to call their solemn resolution of 1799.

My lord, it is not only an error, but somewhat inexcusable, to confound, as you affect to do, the Irish Catholic Prelacy with those trustees of Maynooth, who adopted the resolutions dated January 15th, 16th, and 17th, 1799; because you were fully apprised, while you were writing to the Parish Priest, that this transaction of the trustees had taken place, not only without the concurrence, but absolutely without the knowledge of the Catholic bishops of Ireland. It is a fact, that the great majority of them had never seen these resolutions until their late meeting in Dublin; and that some had not even heard of them. Moreover, in that meeting, to obviate any future mistakes, it was found expedient to remind

their Metropolitans, that these latter had no manner of jurisdiction over their Suffragans, except in the particular cases specified by the Canon law; which notice having been repeatedly given on some late previous occasions, was explicitly acquiesced in. If therefore metropolitans were incompetent, without special appointment, to speak for the Irish Catholic Prelacy, much less competent were the trustees of Maynooth College: and consequently, whoever, like your lordship, may choose to hold the Irish Catholic Prelacy bound by the unauthorized concessions of those trustees, is not more reasonable in that opinion, than if he were to deem a kingdom responsible for the act of a corporation, or a corporation, for the unauthorised act of a few who may belong to it.

But here, let us more particularly examine this transaction of the trustees. In 1799, when the horrors of the preceding year had scarcely subsided, when distrust and jealousy, and suspicion and misrepresentation, and falsehood and calumny, were in active employment, the then government thought proper to present a project, not in an open ostensible way to our body at large, but, as it were, at a back-stairs door to one or two of our ecclesiastical supe-

riors; *viz.* of providing a competent maintenance or temporalities for the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ireland, provided that in return a certain interference of the crown in the appointment of the Roman Catholic bishops, might be admitted.

The *pretext* was to exclude the disloyal; as if the actual Catholic electors were disposed to promote to this dignity exceptionable men. Though the trustees must have thoroughly felt the insult implied in this proposal; though the distrustful ingenuity of illiberal legislation had been long framing for them, and was actually tendering to them oaths of the most revolting texture; though their conscience bore testimony to the purity of their sentiments upon the point of allegiance; and though their conduct had passed untainted through the inquisitorial ordeal of the secret committee, they silently submitted to this new humiliation; and willing to believe that *loyalty* was really the object, as it was seemingly the *pretext* of the proposed interference, they gave, as their private opinion, that such interference, under certain fixed restrictions, might safely be conceded. I say their *private* opinion, because they had no commission or authority whatever to deliver any other; and because, as they

then expressly declared, nothing decisive could be done in this business without the express concurrence of the Holy See.

The circumstance appendant to the above resolution of the trustees in 1799, *viz.* its having been ostensibly founded upon a government proposal of pecuniary provision for the bishops, is without doubt, a most unseemly one; and, as your lordship remarks, must afford a specious argument to their detractors, for charging them with having then conceded, in contemplation of wages, what is now withheld, as incompatible with the safety of the Catholic faith. But, my lord, when you pointed to the probability of such an aspersión, you ought not to have overlooked another circumstance, which fully proves that pecuniary consideration was by no means their object. You well know, that when this lure had been proposed to them, unconnected with Catholic emancipation, they peremptorily refused it, determined to link their fortunes inseparably with those of their community, and to rise or fall with the Irish Catholic people. They declared to the Minister of the day, that whenever the legislature in its wisdom should think proper to admit the Catholic population of Ireland within the pale of the Constitution, the bishops would then

thankfully receive whatever provision might be offered for them; but until that day should come, they would hold to their precarious dependance upon the bounty of their own people.

Mr. Secretary Cook can vouch for the truth of what is here stated: he was pleased at the time to express his regret at their determination, in a long interview with one of them whom you most esteem: and Mr. Parnel has proclaimed his sense of their spirit on that occasion by praying, that their God may bless them for it. But the probability is, that the men then in power had as little idea as Mr. Perceval now has, of appropriating a single shilling to the support of the Catholic Clergy: laughing in their sleeve at the credulity of their Right Reverend Dupes, and utterly abandoning this ill-poised negociation, they dexterously obtained a datum, as they hoped, for some future contingency; and thus dismissing their lordships, the matter fell to the ground.—I wish it had continued under foot.

Mr. Grattan, however, whose exertions in behalf of Ireland, its Catholics I trust, in spite of those who would blame him, will ever gratefully remember, thought proper to take

it up, and exhibit it so conspicuously, but in so new a light, that Catholicity was electrified, and even your lordship was thunderstruck. After all this, how anxiously did I enquire for the Note you received from the Sacred Congregation, and which you so ingenuously promised to lay before the bishops, to prove to them that your opinion upon this point was supported by the implied consent of their Eminences. The authority of the Sacred Congregation being of the greatest weight throughout the Catholic Church, were it as much in favour of the Veto as your lordship gave us to expect, would go very far indeed to exonerate you of blame, and to reconcile the discontented; but what does it really say? This Note begins by declaring, "That Dr. Milner's letter upon this subject, addressed to the Sacred Congregation, has excited in their Eminences the very same apprehensions expressed by that Prelate himself, who considers the time of deciding, in parliament, the fortunes of the Catholics, as the most dangerous to the purity and existence of our religion, that has occurred since the period of the Reformation; nor is it doing an injustice to a Protestant Government, to suspect that the projected measure has no other tendency."—This commencement, my lord, must naturally excite a

wish that your lordship had also thought proper to favour the Prelates with a copy of the Letter written by *you* to the Sacred Congregation, expressive of apprehensions which you now seem to condemn as unfounded, while entertained by the Catholics of Ireland.

With regard to the pecuniary provision then in contemplation for our clerical body, the Note declares “the Vicars Apostolic, and the Catholic Bishops of the empire, must lay aside every idea of their temporal interests, that their hearts be not weakened so far as to induce their consent to any thing prejudicial to the interests of religion.” The Note then gives credit to Dr. Milner for having manifested this disinterestedness throughout the entire of his Letter; but at the same time declares, that it considers *all* the proposals upon this subject, submitted to the Sacred Congregation by Dr. Milner, as replete with the most serious difficulties. The scheme of allowing pensions, &c. it utterly reprobates, adverting to the condemnation of the same plan when it had been proposed for Corsica by England, and for the French Clergy by France.

With regard to the influence required by the civil power in the nomination of bishops,

and the several proposals made for regulating that influence, the Note observes in the first place, that a *positive* nomination can by no means be allowed to a Government whose religion is different from the Roman Catholic, quoting, in support of this peremptory refusal, the declaration of Benedict XIV. in his Letter to the Bishop of Breslaw, dated the 15th of May, 1748, viz. “That in the entire range of ecclesiastical history, there does not occur one single instance of a Roman Catholic Bishop or Abbot having been appointed by a sovereign of another religion;” adding, that he neither would nor could consent to introduce a precedent, which besides scandalising the whole Catholic world, must expose himself to infamy and execration in this life, and to eternal punishment hereafter.” The Note continues and says, “that the same difficulties must arise, though the right of appointment were even limited to a class of clergymen to be first approved of by the bishops: next comes the passage in the Note, which could alone have induced your lordship to quote its authority in favour of your plan; and here again I appeal to the reader, whether the inclination of their Eminences’ mind upon the merits of the *excluding* interference, was not rather reprobative of that measure than commendatory. “The

simple right of rejecting or excluding would produce fewer inconveniencies, were it properly limited."

At best then, in the judgment of the Sacred Congregation, it is a *lesser evil*, though under the controul of a proper and efficient limitation; which controul however, in all the circumstances of the case, is proved to be impracticable, if not rather indeed nugatory; and thus emerging into an absolute right of rejection, must, in the judgment of Benedict XIV, involve those Catholic Prelates, who would procure or abett it, in perpetual infamy and execration.

This same Note further observes, that this right, beside being entirely *new*, is fraught with consequences beyond the reach of calculation. It then concludes by modestly remonstrating upon the very unfounded jealousy of the British government upon this head, after the long experience and the reiterated proofs it has had of the anxiety of the Holy See, that persons selected for the Roman Catholic Prelacy in Ireland, should not only be unexceptionable to our rulers here, but as much as possible pleasing to them; and refers to a very recent instance of its scrupulous caution in this way, as an additional argument of undeviating sincerity.

Upon the entire of this Note, which your lordship has thought proper to adduce in favour of the negative, I will rather suppose I totally misconceive its tendency than ascribe to your lordship a deliberate attempt to prove a point, by a quotation so glaringly hostile to it. The above passages of the Note will be considered a sufficient answer to the remaining paragraphs of your letter; they prepare us also to listen very serenely to those thundering objections, which are to explode against our prelates for their conscientious, humble, and firm rejection of this exceptionable measure.

I cannot however advert to the *encouraging* privilege held out as annexed to it; namely, that of being permitted to ask ministers the *question*; instead of guessing, as heretofore, whether they have heard any thing politically disadvantageous to the character of the proposed candidate.

If this be a privilege, an amelioration of our present condition, it surely is not very enviable! so then our bishops are to have the advantage of putting the most worthy ecclesiastics in every diocese upon their trial; and your lordship would animate them by the cheering odds of a hundred to one in favour of their

being able to filence obloquy, by proving that their candidates were calumniated.

My lord, I have become grey in Ireland, I have long and diligently inspected the prominent characters here, I am also intimate with many who know these characters well, and it is our settled conviction; first, that the above privilege of the *sturdy question* will never prevent his Grace—nor my Lord—nor Sir Knight—nor the Doctor, nor their subaltern Squires, from saying whatever they fancy against the political character of their stumbling block, whether they heard it or not; whether they believe it or not; and secondly, that your great odds will be readily taken up by the knowing ones.

Their hundred to one will be for the aspersions, and against the exculpation; they shall win, and we must certainly lose. The concluding paragraphs of your lordship's letter derive their principal force from ascribing to the Irish Catholic prelacy, what was merely the individual act of the Maynooth trustees.

But had this Letter to a Parish Priest been written subsequently to the last meeting in Dublin, you would doubtless have dis-

criminated more accurately. I have good reason to believe, that you would be quite composed upon the point of consistency, while the Catholic *Prelacy* of Ireland abjured the ill-considered resolutions of the *trustees* of Maynooth.

You would have also learned, that our metropolitans are not acknowledged the efficient representatives of the Catholic Prelacy of Ireland; they themselves are now fully convinced that they are not so acknowledged.

Hence, when they resolved that your lordship should be requested to act for them, when necessary, at the seat of government; this agency was limited to such instructions as you should occasionally receive from the metropolitans in concurrence with their suffragans respectively. But there are few things in this Letter to a Parish Priest, apparently at least, more irreconcilable with your acknowledged abilities and sound judgment, than the stress you lay upon the circumstances of a *friendly* administration, as one saving condition of the kingly interference now under discussion; because every such administration is removable at pleasure; whereas the proposed cession once made, and duly incorporated in the law, re-

mains there solidly established; and being beside jealously restrictive of an invidious, forsworn church, is likely to continue for ever unchanged, though not absolutely unchangeable. If the advantage expected from the friendship of an administration, is to consist in the conciliatory spirit that shall dictate our episcopal statute, and soften down all its enactments to the tone of our fondest hopes; I will ask with a very sensible writer in a late Waterford newspaper, first, whether such a conciliatory spirit is likely to predominate in the men of that expected day, more than it now does in a Grenville, a Ponsonby, or a Grattan, whose friendship you had nearly forfeited by your objecting to an *unrestricted, positive* interference: and will ask in the next place, whether the condescending leniency of the same statute will not at least enact as much, as you yourself are at present ready to concede to it. Be the substance and the form as mild as an anti-catholic government can be expected to make them, their operation must be formidable to the Catholic religion in Ireland.

It has been, I conceive, fully proved in the present reply; and the Note of the Sacred Congregation most impressively indicates a corresponding apprehension. Your lordship well

knows how different the aspect of the same thing shall be in theory and in practice. In a word, to bind ourselves unnecessarily by a permanent law of most dangerous import, in reliance upon the friendship of the then administration, is little less prudent than the act of my unsuspecting countryman, who agreed to be sent to jail, upon hearing of the turnkey's good-nature.

I will now hope, that when your lordship shall have reconsidered this matter; when you shall have dispassionately weighed the many serious difficulties and awful consequences involved in it, as they are felt at present by the entire Catholic body, both clergy and laity of Ireland; you will incline to consider this general alarm as something more important than a transient ebullition of ignorance; a maddened outcry, which you would have the clergy put down by enlightening the people.

My lord, I must suppose, that if in the refulgent repository of your own learned persuasives, your lordship had any more brilliant arguments than those which emblazon your Letter to a Parish Priest, they would have flashed conviction on the minds of your conferees, during your several discussions with

them in the metropolis; or be exhibited in supplementary publications since your return to England: but the fact is, that though our prelates always listened to you, as you well deserve, with animated attention, not a single argument was adduced by you of different import, or of more cogency than your letter had already furnished: and that letter, my lord, I can confidently assure you, has not convinced them; but on the contrary, by urging to investigation, has most decidedly fixed them in the contrary sentiment. Your lordship, I am certain, would scorn the ecclesiastic, who should convey instruction, either moral or political, to his congregation, in direct opposition to the dictates of conscience. To enlighten them therefore in the way you recommend, that is, to argue them into acquiescence in a scheme unequivocally reprobated by their bishops and their clergy, would be equally impracticable and dangerous. Another very obvious consideration must render such an enterprize now utterly hopeless.

You well know, my lord, that ministers and statesmen, in very unwise disregard of the spirit of our constitution, which would invariably exhibit the first Magistrate to his people in the most endearing point of view, have

scrupled not, to hold him out to the population of Ireland as the determined, the almost irreconcilable enemy to their religion; and the insuperable obstacle in the way of their political expectation. Such grating denunciations, so long, so authoritatively and so repeatedly made, were but too well calculated to imprint themselves deeply, if not indelibly upon the hearts of the proscribed; and must, by course of nature, totally indispose them against all and every ecclesiastical superior presenting himself from that quarter.

Here it is my duty to stop—politics are not my sphere; but as God is my judge, I know not of any corrective under Heaven so likely to counteract and gradually to wear off that impression, as the genuine spirit of the Catholic religion, which dictates charitable forgiveness under every provocation, and conscientious submission to the established powers; identifying the voice of salutary law with the voice of God himself, and threatening, in his name, rebellious resistance with assured damnation. Yes, I loudly repeat it, the very best support of domestic peace in Ireland, is that very religion which our short-sighted bigots would so zealously extirpate.

I shall not trespass on the reader's patience by adverting, at any length, to an imputation which was probably fabricated for Dr. Milner, by some daring incendiary; viz. that our prelates, in their resistance to the Veto, were influenced by, and must have yielded to, the suggestions of an Antianglican party in Ireland. It is surely impossible that an insinuation so grossly harsh, so injuriously uncharitable, could have ever dropt from his pen; and therefore the supposed copy or copies of his Letter to a distinguished Senator, wherein that insinuation appears, can be nothing more than the officious inference of some hasty transcriber, embodying his own malignant surmise with the context of his original. Assuredly the reasons here assigned for their dissent are cogent enough to account for it, without conjuring up an ideal influence, which, far from being exerted, never came in contact with that truly independent and respectable body.

And these reasons too, while they account for the opposition of our bishops, do also, in the judgment of every impartial man, most amply justify that opposition. Considering themselves, as they are warranted to do, the Judges of Catholic Doctrine, and charged upon the responsibility of their own souls,

with mentioning in their several congregations the purity of the Catholic faith, they must have felt it an imperious duty to discountenance and to resist any measure which, upon the grounds here stated, appeared so fraught with mischief to that sacred deposit. Temporal advantage, and even life, in the estimation of every true Catholic, still more of every Catholic Bishop, are of no value in competition with the integrity of Divine faith. Death for that, is gain indeed! the absolution of martyrdom, and pledge of the eternal inheritance.

It cannot then be too much to hope that Dr. Milner, so distinguished a luminary in the Catholic world, so zealous a preacher, so able a defender of the treasure entrusted to him, will as it were, now rise above himself, by nobly foregoing a sentiment which he had rather hastily taken up; and perceiving, on maturer consideration, those dangers which had escaped his first view of the subject, he will instantly place himself on the side of his brethren who would guard against those dangers, and present his own shield, if necessary, with theirs: the threatened shafts will then fall harmless. Your lordship appears thoroughly sensible of what great importance to

the Catholic Body of the Empire, is their complete union. In that alone their strength, whatever it may be, most indubitably consists. It is peculiarly incumbent on their spiritual guides, still more by their example than by their instructions, to inculcate this harmony; and hence must have proceeded that laudable anxiety with which you deprecated any thing like division among them. But your fears upon that point, as far as the Irish Catholic bishops and their clergy, with the great bulk of their laity are concerned, have, we thank God, no foundation. You, yourself, witnessed the unanimity of their prelates, and more than once you expressed your glowing admiration of it, when you last addressed them at D'Arcey's hotel. That day, when you honoured them with your company, and were returning thanks for their attentions to you, you did not hesitate to declare, that you considered it the proudest day, or, in your corrected expression, the most gratifying you ever enjoyed. You contemplated with rapture what you were pleased, at the time, to denominate the most respectable portion, perhaps, of the entire Christian Church; alluding, no doubt, to the honourable and edifying attachment to their faith, exhibited during centuries of hardship by the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Ireland.

You avowed yourself particularly charmed with the fraternal union of that venerable assembly, and you concluded by assuring them, that as they had in the Resolution of that day appointed you their Agent, you would always abide inviolably by their instructions.

These minute circumstances I recall to your lordship's recollection, in order to obtain your co-operation in the good work of reconciling to the decision of their prelates, certain respectable individuals of the higher classes of our communion in Ireland, and the generality of them in England, who, I perceive with grief, are exerting themselves, though ineffectually, to counteract that great desideration.

When an obscure, insignificant individual, like myself, can have no pretensions to a hearing from such gentry, a personage of *your* literary rank and sacred character, may command attention. But it is not for me to suggest to Dr. Milner how he is to speak on an occasion like the present. I barely figure to my mind what might, in part at least, be said by him; and what, if conveyed by the masterly force of his eloquence, would certainly conciliate the discontented, and impart that general unanimity, which as much as any thing else at this

awful crisis, is likely to benefit the Empire and ourselves.—But more, I may without presumption, express a wish that he submit to their serious consideration the following queries:

1st. If leading men in administration, have officially declared that they take their stand at the Union, and will never agree to any extension of the privileges at that time enjoyed by Roman Catholics; what authority have we for supposing that a concession on our part of the proposed interference, will certainly obtain for us the emancipation we desire.

2d. Though a positive nomination to the Roman Catholic Prelacy, by an Anti-catholic Executive, be, according to Benedict XIV. equally unprecedented and inadmissible; are we warranted to expect, after what our best and most enlightened friends in Parliament require of us in this matter, that any thing short of a *positive* nomination will satisfy.

3d. Is it certain that a negative interference, as likely to be operative, is quite exempt from the mischiefs involved in a positive one; and which must prevent every conscientious Roman Catholic from acquiescing in it.

4th. If such discrimination were practically ascertainable, what legal security can we have that the compact between us and the state will be always strictly adhered to; when the spirit of the constitution must interpret the law against us.

5th. Does prudence or common sense authorize the Catholic Body, unasked, to come forward to an hostile administration, with a tender of the only valuable they have; when their friends, if in power, would not require this of them?

6th. Whereas a standing record of the Commons'-house proclaims, that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished; is it really promoting the interests of the British empire, or conciliating the good-will of our fellow-subjects at large, to give, by this single measure, a more extended and more weighty preponderance to that influence, than by any other within the circle of Catholic concession.

7th. However individually respectable these Roman Catholics may be, who patronize and advocate the present innovation; are they not a most trivial or rather imperceptible minority,

when opposed to the Catholic Body in Ireland, who unequivocally reprobate it.

8th. If in England the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry are the chief support of their religion there; in Ireland that religion is so diffused through the population, so bottomed upon, and so cherished by the lower and the middling classes of society, that a seceding, which God forbid, of the Catholic Aristocracy, could make scarcely a sensible impression.

9th. Is there a parity of reasoning for the Veto, between States where neither Charter-schools, nor a penal code, nor severe exclusions, nor an organized system of proselytism are to be found, or even heard of; and a State where all these things, invigorated by the very spirit of the Constitution, are marshalled in avowed hostility against the Roman Catholic religion.

10th. Are the Irish Roman Catholic Bishops, under all the circumstances heretofore stated, less entitled to the character of honest, upright, and conscientious men, for having withheld their assent from the proposed measure, than they would be, had they acceded to it?

Candid answers to the above queries will, I trust, contribute not a little to reconcile to their spiritual superiors those respectable individuals who blamed them for the part they have taken. That part, however, is a *decided one*; and to obviate any contrary insinuations, it is only necessary to state that Resolution of the Synod, which was unanimously adopted for the express purpose of guarding the Sovereign Pontiff against possible misrepresentation, in a matter of such vital importance.

RESOLVED—“ That the four Metropolitans (as soon as conveniently it can be done) do communicate the first and second Resolutions to the Holy See, under their hands and seals.”

Now, my lord, with a long farewell, I withdraw from this very unpleasant discussion, determined never more to intrude upon your lordship, or the public.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your devoted humble servant,

An Irish Roman Catholic Clergyman.

THE TWO LETTERS,

*Addressed to the Roman Catholic Clergy
and Laity of the County of Louth.*

LETTER THE FIRST.

GENTLEMEN,

Having lately read an anonymous notice, whereby you are invited to meet in Dundalk, on the 6th of December, for the purpose of declaring your sentiments of approbation and gratitude towards our honest Irish Bishops for their late conduct, I was led, from conjecturing the probable motives of that advertisement, to conjecture the possible result of such a meeting, and I was finally determined to address you in this manner, upon the single ground of that interest, which every Catholic is bound to feel and to avow, in all questions of important concern and of general danger. If this duty was ever sacred, it is imperious at this particular moment, when, over and above the disadvantages of our political situation, we labour under the contagion of domestic treachery; when, besides the evils of degradation, the threatened abandonment of ostenta-

tious friends, and the irksomeness of perpetual, abject, and disregarded supplication, a spirit at once impudent and atrocious of contempt for the holy bonds of that religion, by which we have hitherto been saved and sheltered, has newly arisen from amongst ourselves, affecting to be impious, and convicted of being traitorous: when that spirit, which, in 1792, came forth to blast the ripe prospect of emancipation, and thus prepared the way for the crimes and slaughter of 1798, reveals itself again as the harbinger of another civil war. It then addressed the Government in the name of Catholic *respectability*, and protested against our freedom; it now wishes to address in the name of Catholic *Irreligion*, and to protest against our *Faith*.—Its piety, in that year, was to advocate our Chains; its loyalty, in this, is to demolish our Altars. But our chains will fall, and our altars will stand, and our traitors will perish.

The accusation is heinous I know, and therefore will demand to be made out by evident facts. It is my intention to recapitulate those facts in the progress of this letter, but the subject immediately before me is the propriety of your meeting, according to the request of that advertiser. You must not take offence at the supposition on which I proceed.

I am not possessed of the comparative state of Catholic mind or independence in your county. Were I to judge of either, from an account of proceedings lately published, and consisting of a letter to, and an answer from the M. R. Dr. Reilly, I must estimate them to be low in the extreme.

Without adverting to the wickedness and indecency of such a trick, as practised on an aged, venerable, and unsuspecting prelate, and upon a young and delicate lord in the country, that proceeding may possibly have been droll enough, though shameless; but yet it gives room to suspect, that the Catholics of Louth are not apt to retaliate when jested upon. It would have been dangerous to try an experiment of that sort in this city. A worthy bishop happens to be in a minority against his colleagues, and the difference lay in a short compass of words—he wished to use *existing circumstances*, meaning thereby the want of recognition of the Catholic religious system in the state, and the impracticability of procuring, at the present, a canonical arrangement with the Head of the Church.

This form of speech was objected to by his colleagues, as tending to mislead, as holding out an encouragement to impure sollicita-

tion, and as favouring the views of unprincipled nominal Catholics, who used the same form, as a designation of the present Anti-papery Ministry.

The good prelate yields to higher authority, and to candid sense—he consents that his *existing circumstances* shall be expunged, and wishes that the amended resolution shall pass unanimously.

Once this was done; what man of common sense would need to be informed, that the private opinion of this prelate was either null, or that of the assembly: That he, as member of the Catholic Church of Ireland, was bound by the sense of the meeting, and was even controuled from returning to use those two equivocal terms, unless he explained, at least, his own meaning.

But, for your *incomparable legislators* of the county of Louth, (while I use the phrase I am thoroughly aware that the majority were the dupes of *Two*,) it was enough that your bishop was known to have cherished the words *existing circumstances*, and therefore, after the meeting of prelates had dissolved itself, those gentlemen think it right to interrogate Doctor Reilly about his *non opinion* on a matter al-

ready decided against him, and about *existing circumstances* which they knew to be a *double entendre*. My respect for the Catholic Primate will not permit me to dwell upon other particulars of his much to be regretted *Answer*.

If then, gentlemen, you feel neither scorn nor ridicule, in the exhibition of your county, thus held up to contempt; if you think it feditious to question the sound sense of any paper, to which a young Nobleman has been entrapped to set his name; if your oracles, on the question of Catholic Freedom, are to be these alone who are the pensioners *at pleasure* of an administration, who keeps you as you are, and who were the pensioners of another administration, that swelled your rivers with Popish blood; if actors, hooted from the Dublin stage, are to be now your *managers*, on every case of state and conscience; above all, if you heartily wish destruction to the Catholics of Ireland, or care little whether you are destroyed or not, I would advise you *not* to meet at Dundalk, for your shame, and servitude, and guilt will be proclaimed in the certain victory and noisy triumph of your *present Catholic rulers*.

But if you are not so disposed, I beg of you to understand, from the following recital, the

business on which you have been called to assemble.

A proposal was sent in 1799 from Lord Cornwallis to the ecclesiastical trustees of Maynooth College. This proposal required information from our bishops on certain points, which Mr. Pitt thought essential for securing the government, in the case of emancipation, and of giving salaries to our clergy.

After some huddled meetings, these ecclesiastical trustees were so far wrought upon by threats and by artifice, as to agree or propose among other things, the following, concerning the election of Bishops: that whenever a Catholic See was vacant, the Diocesan Chapters should return a name to a certain other body called the Electors, whose President should send up the name to Government; that the person so chosen, if agreeable to Government, should have his name and recommendation transmitted to the Pope, *through the Office of the Secretary of State*; that if the candidate was displeasing, the Government might, within a *reasonable* time, and upon *reasonable* grounds, return the name to the Electors, who thereupon were to proceed to a new election.

This document purported to be signed by ten Prelates; it is probable that several of these signed by proxy, and it is certain that nothing further was proceeded upon, in consequence of this scheme. Some indirect offers were afterwards made to our bishops of a salary *to them, without a Catholic emancipation*, but these offers were meekly yet decisively rejected.

And here the celebrated Dr. Milner appears upon the stage: a great man, if talent, courage, perseverance, and inflexibility of principles and of opinions can make a man so; he had distinguished himself in a signal manner, in his antiquarian researches, and in the controversy with Lord Petre, &c. he had defeated Sturges in his letters to a Prebendary; the place of an Apostolical Vicar in England was empty, and the Rev. John Milner was considered a worthy person by two of the English missionary bishops; he was opposed by the Cisalpine faction, which he had combated.—By the Arch Vicar of London, who either feared the consequences of his bold temper, or shrunk under the ascendancy of his genius, the interest of the English Government was borrowed against his nomination; and it was

signified to Rome that the appointment of Milner, a polemical character, would be distasteful to high authority. The Bishop of Rome refused to name him. In this state of things the Catholic Archbishops of Ireland represented the merits and innocence of Dr. Milner to the Pope, and by virtue of this representation, he was nominated to the place he holds, *notwithstanding the opposition of Government influence!*

This is the Dr. Milner, who now professes to believe, that *the most worthy* ought to be set aside from a bishopric, if the Irish Viceroy, *who is the best judge of loyalty*, should reject him! a consistent man, and a grateful return!—Though Irish bishops were fully competent to vouch for *his* fitness, whom they never had seen, and on a question of loyalty, which Bishop Milner now thinks must *be discussed by the Government on the spot*, those bishops are not competent to judge on the loyalty of their own Irish Priest.

To return to the scheme of 1799;—It was fortunate enough, that Mr. Pitt, the proposer of this scheme, was insincere. It was well for this country, that the only object of the Minister had been to set up a new principle of

division on the heart of the country, preparatory to the Union. Mr. Pitt might possibly have pensioned our clergy, but he would have done it in the same spirit, which enlisted the Irish brigade, and sent off that faithful, gallant, invincible body of men to the West Indies. He would have enlisted our clergy, that he might order them on *decisive service*. As to the wording of the scheme, it appeared to me when I read it, to be a vile, hobbling imitation of certain articles in the civil constitution of the Revolutionary French Clergy, and argued a draftsman, most entirely ignorant of Catholic discipline. The Maynooth College Trustees were happy enough to find that their sketch was not favoured with acceptance. For even supposing them to have been *free* in that negotiation, their offer had exceeded not only their episcopal power, but all ecclesiastical authority whatsoever, as known to Roman Catholics, and of this they soon became sensible. In the first place they found, that by allowing their recommendations of candidates to pass through the offices of Government to the head of the Catholic Church, they had reduced themselves to the necessity of corresponding *through the same Government*, on all matters, which hereafter might be claimed by it, as fit for the state to interfere in, and thus

the Communion of Ireland with the Catholic Church, through its first Bishop, was implicitly submitted to the *discretion* of a party, whose principles, prejudices, fancy, or malice were equally interested in abridging the freedom of spiritual communication.

In the second place, they had precluded themselves from objecting to any candidate whom the administration might favour; and, to suppose that government would wish to know *the secret history of every candidate*, without eventually favouring *any one*, is a supposition that no man of common sense will either make or stoop to answer. Will administration pass through its own office a remonstrance of Catholic bishops *against the man*, whom administration has resolved to favour? Such a thing may happen when English ministers will furnish proofs to parliament upon their own impeachment.

In the third place, by means of this projected arrangement, the *canonical* authority of the head over the members, and the *fundamental* authority of the Catholic church over all its parts, in matters of essential discipline and good morals, was completely excluded and annihilated.

The fact is plain—for the negotiation leaves nothing to the Holy See upon which to exercise canonical judgment. The Pope, at the very utmost, *may grant spiritual faculties*, to use the words of Bishop Milner, to the person on whom the happy lot of *having found* favour with our bishops and our Secretary's office had fallen—But if the Pope, from certain knowledge, judges the candidate very unfit, he must even keep his faculties at home. This most obvious consequence has, somehow or other, escaped the observation of Dr. Milner in all his speeches and essays on the subject. It shews with what steady attention, and with what depth, he has examined the business upon which he tells the Irish Catholics that their heads are wrong.

But if the government, says this scheme, should, on proper grounds, and within a reasonable time, dissent from the nomination of *the President of the Electors* (here we have a new species of hierarchy of the Secretary's *ordination*) the Electors may proceed to a new election; so they may, if allowed to do so. They may take another step, as before, towards the sky. But are the Electors authorized to foreclose the government, if they should consider an unreasonable time that which the govern-

ment thinks reasonable? Who shall prescribe to the government the limits of its defensive caution, unless the law can do it? The government considers, in this scheme, the Catholic bishops to be dangerous; so that the very best are not to be relied upon. I do not imagine the government will be in any great hurry to replace this order of men. If, by delay, they can wear them out, they will be too conscientious not to delay on all occasions.

Archbishop King has complained that James II. kept the Protestant Sees vacant.—His object, says the archbishop, was to destroy Protestant episcopacy in this manner. Yet James II. had both the right and good cause for *delay*, when he knew that the episcopal body was confederated against his throne. If a protestant administration, professing to hold our bishops a *nuisance*, can *fairly* and *decently* destroy them by *delay*, who doubts that they will do so? And the scheme of 1799 allows them to delay on *proper grounds*, and *over and over again* on every vacancy.

But what fixes the seal of iniquity on this business of 1799 is, that the administration held out a condition, which they full well knew they could not perform, and therefore may

truly be judged to have meant never to perform. In this scheme, all mention of further relaxation of the penal laws was most carefully avoided, and yet the administration undertakes to transmit documents, authenticated by the Secretary of State, to Rome. Now, by the provisions of the constitution, his Majesty in person can neither send nor receive a letter, messenger, or message, to or from the Pope, and an Officer of State committing such an act would be within the penalties of a *Premunire*, that is, loss of all his substance, sequestration of his estates, and perpetual imprisonment.

You shall hear again from me before the day of your meeting.

DETECTOR.

LETTER II.

GENTLEMEN,

You have heard of the scheme for capturing the Catholic Church of Ireland, as gained from the ten Maynooth Trustees in 1799. You have understood the gross deception practised upon some of our bishops, the nullity of the

compromise itself, and the important mischiefs it would have wrought, if attempted to be enforced at that time. As an ecclesiastical transaction it was absolutely and incurably void, as a political negotiation it was utterly fraudulent, as a modification of rights it was an usurpation upon the Catholic people of Ireland, and, as it usurped what was public and sacred property, it was not less than a commerce in robbery, and that robbery not less than sacrilege; for this is the birthright of our baptism, and the prerogative of our faith in the Catholic church, that we cannot be enslaved; we cannot be transferred nor surrendered by any spiritual authority, to any mixed jurisdiction, to which we had never submitted our conscientious and voluntary obedience. There can be no bishops without flocks, nor ministry without bishops, nor Catholic church without both, inseparably united together. Whatever parts these, interrupts thus far the authorities which reside in the combination of both, and unconsecrates the church from its immortal properties and high-born jurisdiction over the mind. This jurisdiction has one limit clearly defined and established immovably above all doubt—it cannot give scandal. The totality of bishops and of priests throughout the Catholic world have not the power to

enact, teach, or sanction that which shall scandalize the Catholic world, and in like manner, but with better reason, the bishops of a Catholic nation ought and cannot do that which gives scandal to all their people. Such authority would be the privilege of destruction, which Christianity abhors and abjures.

Bishop Milner, I know, has been kind enough to confess, that *his proposal to a Member of Parliament gave scandal* to the Irish Catholics; but he qualifies the acknowledgment in a way that comes with an air of novelty from a bishop; it gave offence, as he understood, *to the Clergy of the second order and to the lower orders of the Laity*. Had you, Bishop Milner, turned your genius, which is formidable, to the perusal of those gospels with which the Church entrusted you, you would have seen that the scandal to be avoided more than death; that the *only scandal* against which the commination of our law-giver directs itself, is the scandal that offends the weak and the simple, that very class, and unimportant class of men, whom you, in the grandeur of your heart and elevation of your prospects, so flauntingly put aside from all interest or consideration in this argument; you were misled, I suppose, by the habitual ideas of your own country. You

knew, that those who do not contribute to the poor rates, are not allowed to intrude at vestry for the election of a churchwarden. You knew, that at the Quarter Sessions, where very probably you expect to sit of the quorum, they who have no visible means of livelihood, are usually examined, not whether they approve of the new or the old doctrines, but whether they are able-bodied men, and willing to be whipped, or go on board. But in Ireland we have no poor rates, our rates of all descriptions travel to your country; I should suppose for improvement. In return, we have the imports of civilization and illumination, though our city nights are lightless, and our streets impassable. We get in return wholesome *bills*, elegant restrictions, classical abuse, and imperial logic.—Good heavens! Dr. Milner, must we not be supposed to have acquired some judgment under so laborious a system of education?

But surely the learned Bishop was not serious in attempting to skip over the presumption arising from the facts he allows, though he might have forgotten the points of *right*. The lower orders of Catholics are three millions, of whom three hundred thousand are able to read and understand his best work. The se-

cond order of clergy contains more than one thousand priests, who reprobate his project, among whom are not a few but very many, not incompetent to oppose severally their opinion and judgment to that of Dr. Milner himself. If Dr. Milner had such and so many adherents to boast of, it is hardly to be suspected that he would overlook such evidence in his favour.

The points of right he has forgotten to consider are these:—First, that in all matters of innovation, beyond the ordinary or peculiar functions of a bishop, the assistance of his council is required, else the act is informal; the council is of the *second order*.

The second point is, that *those lower orders of Catholics* are they, who have supported, defended, and protected the Catholic Episcopacy for near two hundred and forty years in Ireland, always voluntarily and upon the ground of preference; which preference, possession and title have been heretofore made good against attempts of the Court of Rome, under the impression of false offers, as from the Court of Charles I. to abolish our Apostolical Hierarchy, and substitute Vicars Apostolical.

The third point is, that to the *lower orders*, or, in other words, the Catholic population of Ireland, refusing to obey any revolutionary bishops, such as Dr. Milner would have us obey, the new plan would be ineffectual; as no power of Kings or Popes could rightfully subdue them to any change of this kind. If any struggle ensued, although Dr. Milner himself were to enter the lists, a Pope would more easily be deposed for attempting to compel, than would the Catholics of Ireland be condemned for resisting the penal innovation.

The measure of an Union was carried, and no relief for the Catholics. Mr. Pitt, indeed, adverted to their emancipation, not as likely to take place, but as a thing, which could be discussed with safety no where, unless in an Imperial Senate; and which *would be always certain of a fair dispassionate hearing*. The No Popery men, we may recollect, accomplished this prediction of Mr. Pitt. The then minister, (now in Heaven) moreover hinted at the propriety of pensioning our clergy. But *gentle* as he was (notwithstanding his principle, that wheat and flour were *ammunition*, and that a nation might lawfully be starved, for the purpose of reducing an armed party within, that could not be starved) he did not urge the topic.

Soon after the Union, he gave up, or lost his place. During the *interregnum* of Mr. Addington, we had *one* insurrection, and *one* Lord Redefdale, and a plentiful inundation of English methodists, all fair youths, with nice hands, bay geldings, and searching eyes of contemplation, whenever a woman, not past the age of grace, stood to listen.

It was as dangerous in those times for an Irishman to say "*Swadler*" as for a French parrot in the French revolution to whistle "*Democrate*." Two pamphlets were written against a Catholic gentleman, chiefly on the score of his profaneness in that respect. Mr. Pitt returns to power, washed and purified from all his engagements to the Catholic people, or to their bishops and priests. He came in on the condition of abjuring these engagements, and died a minister as he had lived.

Now, I submit to any fair man, Catholic or Protestant, whether, in the supposition that the ecclesiastical scheme of 1799, had been, not as it was, the act of ten bishops at the utmost, but of the twenty-five Irish prelates; if it had been even acquiesced in by the colleagues of those who signed, whereas it was studiously concealed from them—if it had been notified

to the first Christian bishop, during whose captivity in France it was proposed, and to whose successor it was not communicated by either of the parties ; if it had been concurred in by the Deans, Chapters, Theologians, and Parish Priests of our Church, as it was held secret from them all ; if it had the approbation of the people, as it was certain of meeting their detestation ; I say, if in the formation of this scheme all those requisites had intervened, of which every one was wanting, of which the want of any single requisite vitiated the instrument, and the want of all rendered it superfluously void ; when Mr. Pitt, who proposed this scheme, did voluntarily and wantonly cast off that character, under which, and by virtue of which alone he seduced that agreement—when Mr. Pitt incapacitated himself from obtaining, by law, the possibility of a communication with Rome, which was the groundwork of the new modification ; I ask, whether this document did not totally fail of its motive, conditions, sense, and parties, so as to have become literally waste paper ?

Now Dr. Milner, in 1808, tells us, that this document of 1799 is considered by *our friends and enemies in parliament as obligatory upon the bishops*, and he gives us to understand that such

is his own idea. Were Dr. Milner's interest to be affected by an obligation perfected under such circumstances by *one* Vicar Apostolical, and made void as we have stated, and re-produced, after nine years, by a stranger, who had found the paper amongst other official rubbish, he would not, I presume, betray such forgetfulness of the elements of fair dealing.

Still let us allow, in contradiction to all the evidence lately adduced, that the paper of 1799 had been a serious, honest, and valid agreement between all the parties interested; and let us barely ask the question, whether the events which came to light since the date of that transaction, would be not more than sufficient to justify the Catholic parties to the agreement, in appealing to the immutable sense of justice from the literal obligation of such agreement.

In all the succession of ministers, have we discovered any thing like a wish to grant to us the secure possession of our religion? Have our friends even risked their *popularity* in the sister island, (I mean that very low share of negative approbation, to which alone an Irishman can expect to rise in England,) by stepping forward in behalf of our conscientious preju-

dices? I do not argue merely on the denial of free worship in England to our Irish soldiers.— Let this have been the misdeed of the No Popery men—but even here I will dwell on what escaped our friends, concerning the validity of laws made in relief of Catholics.

By the Irish law of Catholic Relief, in 1793, our countrymen, in his Majesty's service, had gained a right to worship the God of their fathers; and in 1806, we are informed by our great parliamentary friends, this right was understood to have been done away! that a new clause in the Mutiny Bill, or a new provision by law was necessary to give effect to this liberty of Irish conscience. You knew this fact, Bishop Milner! and you laboured zealously and perseveringly to cure this mischief, for which we thank you, notwithstanding the ill success of your exertions with *our friends*.

So then, the document of 1799, signed by ten trustees, though without meaning, though without parties, though without free concurrence, though signed by ten prelates out of twenty-five, on the behalf of a Pope, a Church, a Priesthood, a Nation, never consulted, never consenting, nor likely to consent—though cancelled by the minister, and cancelled by an official

violation of its only possible sense and import—though abhorred and execrated by us all, this document is to possess an immortal binding force notwithstanding that Union, which, unknown to us, by the mere efficacy of legal metaphysics, explained by English Special Pleaders, had abrogated the rights of conscience for the Irish soldier, as soon as he touched on English ground.

The paper of our *ten* was as sacred and imperishable as *Shylock's oath in heaven*; the paper of our statutes, the force of our rights, our legal exercise of religion, was repealed by a fiction of English law, against all right, all equity, all precedents, even that of the Spanish inquisition! I am not surpris'd to think that the men, who have thus expounded the operation of our Union, should expound the paper of 1799 as obligatory upon the whole world, for iniquity is very consistent.

What I fear and lament as too probable is, that our English Bishop has a little too much of that patriotic feeling, which, wishing to take all, and to give nothing, considers Ireland as incapable of any negotiation unless to its own dishonour and loss, and to the profit of the sister.—In this latter case, Ireland is always

competent to contract by any hand, at any time, or any terms, and all such contracts are irrevocable.

Let us travel forward—Our friends next proceeded to furnish us with a *reserve* of Martial Law. This system, said Mr. Grattan, in the Irish Parliament, when he spoke there for the last time, is to give to Ireland a government of military force and martial law. This system was revived afterwards, with the applause of Mr. Grattan himself. He must have thought it a step towards our emancipation. The next step towards our emancipation was a new penal law or *wholesome restriction* on Popish education, and to this Bill Mr. Grattan gave his approbation. It has subjected all our Popish schools to the visitation of the Minister of each parish.

A progressive system of this kind betrays a great tendency to use any power of intermeddling in our church concerns, if not with partiality in our favour, at least without a bias to root out our *old superstition*. Another friend to our emancipation declared himself honestly to incline towards that redress of the Catholics, which should *emancipate them from their spiritual blindness*.

The Foundling Hospital is recruited with innocents from the sister country—the Charter-schools are organized and besomed, that the seven worst spirits of inveteracy to our mode of belief, might find roomy and suitable entertainment. Our emancipation was still talked of; it would come, it would come infallibly; those preparations were the forerunners of it, though some testy and bigoted or melancholy individuals of our communion, considered this gentle working like the Lilliputian tactics for fastening Gulliver when asleep, with twenty thousand little packthreads, to the ground. Those unhappily suspicious men thought they could observe a great patience, on the part of our friends, with regard to our claims, and a considerable alacrity in the undertaking of *converting us*, in the mean time.

Glebe-houses set out, churches rebuilt from the ruin of more than a hundred years, Charter-schools *put in activity*, coal-ship loads of Protestant children, great suspicion of the Pope's collusion with Bonaparte, and great apprehensions of the influence of our bishops, *in organizing a party for the Corsican*. But we had nothing at all to fear from these preparations against us.

Last of all came the grand epoch of the Dissolution of Parliament, and his Majesty's appeal to the ENGLISH PROTESTANTS against an Emancipation. The question was now settled for one reign, which every subject heartily prays may continue long.

The question determined finally, was not that the emancipation *can not take place* during his Majesty's glorious reign; for however improbable this may be, it is still to be allowed that notorious circumstances are tending fast to render something of the kind an imperative measure.

The question determined finally is this:— That the conscience of his Majesty; that the conscience of the English Church Established, of the Teaching Bodies, of the Commons, of the Rabble, is decidedly adverse to the encouragement or permanency of the Catholic system. Is it to this *discretion*, to this *conscience*, that our religion can be safely or rationally entrusted? Is the necessary quantum of loyalty in a Catholic bishop to be scanned by that judgment, for which a love or zeal towards the Catholic religion is a high matter of offence; for which an indifference to the honour of his faith, to the purity of Catholic princi-

ple, must be a material recommendation? for which, to be *rather* negligent of our peculiar forms, *rather* unrestrained in practice, *rather* distasteful to the *bigotted* Papist—to be a muzzled watch-dog, a fawning companion, a hunter of levees, a stranger to the base wants of the base multitude, must be something like merit, and much more than virtue?

Is it to such judgment we could appeal, against a candidate known to the fox-hunting influence, on the ground of objections which, in our system are fatal, and in that system must be none of inhuman pride, of opprobrious avarice, of spotted chastity, of sensual stupor? Must Catholics trust to pastors who have gone through a private ordeal of this sort? They surely would never trust them, and thus the destruction of Episcopacy would follow of necessity.

With all this before his eyes, Bishop Milner, at the last hearing of the Catholic Petition, engages that the King should hold a Veto upon the election of our bishops. Was not this indiscreet?—Add, that it was done without authority—Add, that it was done *after* Bishop Milner had consulted the Head of the Church, *whether the concession could be made*, and the Head

of the Church had declared in the words of Benedict XIV. that “were he to attempt to give effect to such a power, he would deserve the execration of the Catholic World.”

But it seems the words of Bishop Milner have been misrepresented, and he complains of this injury.—Before we argue upon his words, we must lay hold of his deeds. He *did grant* a Veto, it matters not now to what extent. He still insists upon the propriety of his interference; he persists in his opinion; he impeaches as seditious those who oppose it—that is, ALL THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS, and ALL THE CATHOLIC PEOPLE OF IRELAND—that is, he does, as far as in him lies, encourage persecution against the Christian Church, in defence of his own opinion. He smites the Pope, though the *Pope's Vicar Apostolical*; he arraigns the Bishops his Creators, and the Irish Nation, *whose Agent* he styles himself. This is something more grievous than a dispute of words.

However, we will examine his words, as reported by the Right Hon. G. Ponsonby to the House of Commons—“That his Majesty would hold the power of rejection, which would amount to a VIRTUAL NOMINATION, and thus the King would *become in fact the Head of our Church.*”

The good Bishop abominates the inference of giving a *supremacy to the King over our Church*; —He disclaims these last words, and I believe with truth; he declares he would shed his blood sooner than agree to or propose such a thing; and from my soul I believe him. But Mr. Ponsonby maintains, that the Bishop *did represent* the proffered right of rejection, as equivalent to a *positive or virtual power of nomination*, and it is not possible to think that Mr. Ponsonby deceived himself, as it is entirely incredible that he would deceive.

That Mr. Ponsonby might have misunderstood the *Ecclesiastical* distinction, is granted; because he is a stranger to our systems. It cannot be imagined that he could have also mistaken the nature of a *power of controul*, as his professional habits must have peculiarly fitted him for collecting precise ideas on every subject of the kind. If this be so, it matters little, except as to the orthodoxy of Dr. Milner, whether he *deliberately* or *imprudently*—whether in *theory* or in *practice*, he appointed his Majesty to be the Head of our Church; for, that the proposal did carry the consequence, is a matter of intuition.

Admitting, therefore, the orthodoxy of Dr.

Milner, and insisting that this single point is the only fact misrepresented, a plain reflection occurs here. If Mr. Ponsonby, *a friend*, and one of the best of our friends, saw the King's supremacy so plainly included in the new proposal, as to have confounded the virtual meaning with the original offer, is it to be doubted that, in the event of such a controul being given, it would be exercised with a view to establish that supremacy?

Another, and an equally serious matter of reflection arises on the subject. When Mr. Ponsonby assured the House of Commons that we would accede to this virtual Supremacy, was there any loud acclamation in favour of our claims? Did the offer gain us a single vote from the country gentlemen, from the patriotic Burdett, from the No-popery sticklers?—Not one. Thus would it be, if we had apostatized to a man. This little fact shews the sincerity of objections taken from our faith against our claims. Yet the hypocritical No-popery scoundrels will tell the world, that but for this, every thing might be done.

Our bishops were called upon by the public voice to declare themselves. They were charged with the odium and scandal of what

had passed in the Imperial Parliament. They met, consulted, and without either courting base popularity, or scorning the just uneasiness of the people, without condemning Dr. Milner, or flattering his plans, they wisely and bravely at once professed their loyalty and confessed their faith, by resolving “that the ancient, irreproachable and canonical method of appointing their colleagues will not be changed; and by undertaking to recommend only such candidates as shall be men of approved loyalty and peaceable demeanour.”

Before the passing of these two Resolutions, we were advised by Dr. Milner, in his *Letter to an Irish Catholic Parish Priest*, to leave the settling of the dispute to our worthy prelates, to whom solely the discussion and judgment, as of right belonged, and we were informed that nothing was to be feared so much, as *division* amongst the bishops themselves. The bishops did examine the question, and *unanimously* decided *against* Dr. Milner’s plan. This unanimity has proved disastrous to our bishops, in Dr. Milner’s opinion; for he has recently addressed an English newspaper, for the purpose of informing the English public—1. That he had been induced to expect a very different result from the Irish meeting.—2. That the most *re-*

Speñtable of the prelates were privately in union with him. Of these two assertions, the first accounts for his anxious wish that the bishops should be *unanimous*; and the second shews pretty plainly that he does not scruple to make *division* amongst our bishops, whenever they unluckily do not obey his directions, notwithstanding *their sole competence* to judge on the point in question. He is a clever man, but he uses too largely the motives of religion for carrying on his own projects.

This, however, is not to be endured in his late Letter—that after his declarations in *The Evening Herald*, of scrupulous regard for the confidence reposed in him, he should now pretend to divulge confidential reasons of our bishops given *in his hearing*, and that those reasons so divulged should be either inadequate, or impertinent, or false, or malicious.

All his pretended reasons are inadequate, and one is remarkably ill-complexioned. The bishops in his hearing, *are said to have said*, “we promoted the *Union* to the utmost of our power.” I believe that several of them spoke well of it, as tending to stop infinite massacre, and as represented to them, by men whose honour they knew not how to suspect, as the

only hope for Catholics—but as to active interference, one only of our bishops interfered, and that person was not *within Dr. Milner's hearing*, during his late visitation of this Island.

For my part, I did not watch the bishops with a view to charging my portfolio. But I heard reasons very different from the profane motives, which the Doctor has laid before his countrymen, and with Dr. Milner's permission I will state them as they occur to me :

1. The power of nominating Bishops is derived from the King's title, as Head of the Church.—(I. Blackstone). Against which it occurred—‘ If any man profanes the Temple of God,’ it is written that ‘ him will God exterminate’—and again it is written, ‘ and He is the Head of the Church’—and again, ‘ My kingdom is not from this world’—and again, ‘ He who is not with Me, is against Me’—and again it is written, ‘ You have been enfranchised at a great price; do not now become the slaves of men’—and again, ‘ Not you have made choice of Me, but I have chosen you’—and again, ‘ As my Father sent Me, so do I send you’—and again, ‘ The Kingdom of God is amongst yourselves’—and again, ‘ Do not tremble, my scanty flock; because it hath been pleasing to my Father to bestow on you a

kingdom'—and again, 'And thou hast made us before our God a Kingly Power and a Priesthood'—and again, 'Every Kingdom parted against itself shall be brought to desolation'—and again, 'Beware of mankind, for they will betray you!'—and again, 'Our struggle is not with flesh and blood, but with the rulers of everlasting darkness, and with the spiritual things of malice in the highest places'—and again, 'The animal man knows not the things of God'—and again, 'But I will not be judged by you, nor by any human summons; the Lord is he who judgeth me'—and again, 'What fellowship between light and darkness?'—and again, 'It hath seemed meet to the Holy Ghost and to Us'—and again, 'The Spirit breathes where it listeth, so is every man who is generated and of the Spirit'—and again, 'Hear you what the Spirit says to the Churches'—and again, 'While they fasted and performed holy function, the Holy Spirit said to them, set apart for me Paul and Barnabas.'

2. As to the loyalty of Dr. Milner, when he professes, in order to ensure approbation to his plan, that he merely gives to Cæsar the things of Cæsar, *we have brought this man, refusing that tribute should be given to Cæsar and every man who makes himself King opposes the title of Cæsar, we have no King unless Cæsar.*



3. As to the modified grant of a Veto, it was considered, that this grant must be bounded, or must be ruinous: that it cannot be bounded, for all law is against the limitation; there are no parties who can contract with the Irish Catholic Church, and without a security which may appear durable, no concession can be made, as no resumption of the grant could be attempted, without certain opposition and probable destruction.

4. That this grant would cut off the Irish Church from its communion with the rest of the Catholic world, wherein no concession of this nature had ever been heard of.

5. That it would scandalize all true Catholics, knowing as they did, the intention of those who demanded it.

6. That this scandal and consequent abandonment would extinguish the Catholic Religion.

7. That the controul was unfavourable to morals, whereas our moral code is not known to the Laws or Constitution.

8. That this controul would necessarily overthrow the efficacy of the sacramental doctrine of Penance.

9. That the controul would necessarily destroy the sacramental integrity of marriage.

10. That it was without a precedent in the Christian Church, and without even a pretext in the country; that consequently it was demanded for reasons remaining in the knowledge of the other party, and therefore, for reasons, hostile to us and to our Religion.

These reasons may be bad in the estimation of Dr. Milner; but they are, however, very different from those he has been pleased to invent.

The shortness of time will not suffer me to proceed; but you have heard enough to apprise you of the state of the question. If you meet, may God prosper you, and may he strike your apostates either with shame or with silence. You shall hear from me again.

DETECTOR.*

* The two Letters, by Detector, appeared not long since in a Dublin Evening Paper, on the occasion of a meeting of the Catholic Clergy and Laity of Louth, being convened by an anonymous advertisement; and from their immediate relation to the subject of the preceding Letter, the Author has been induced to present them to the Public with it.

FINIS.